



July 2, 2003

TO: Eric Kuhn, Board of Directors, CRWCD

FROM: Dave Kanzer

SUBJECT: *North Fork of the Gunnison River Water Supply Study Update*

1. Hydrological Conditions

The North Fork of the Gunnison River Basin is doing fairly well this runoff season (especially compared to last year). Paonia Reservoir filled and spilled for about a month (similar to most years); it is a small storage facility on a large drainage basin. Because there is little storage in the basin, water users are still nervous about this summer's growing season. If "normal" climatological conditions persist, most water users should be okay; Paonia Reservoir usually provides about a two month supplemental water supply to the Fire Mountain Canal which supplies the orchardists in the Rogers Mesa area. Now that we have made it to July, Mainstem water users are insulated from any senior call from Redlands Water and Power due to USFWS interim contract releases from the Aspinall Unit to the Redlands Fish Ladder.

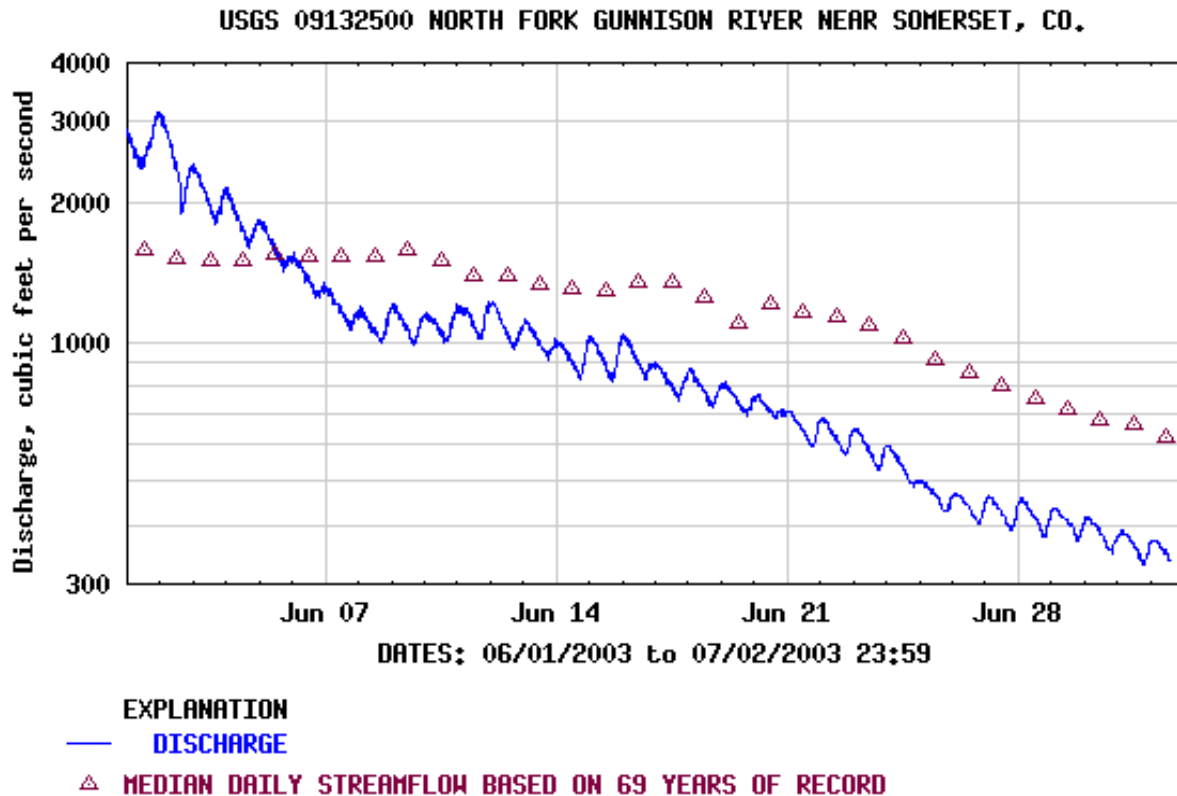
In the tributary basins, in particular, water users of Surface and Tongue Creeks are also doing pretty well (near average) and are way ahead of last year. Fruitgrowers Reservoir filled and contrary to last year when short term water was selling for greater than \$200/acre-foot, indications are that water can be had for \$75-100 per af. Overland Reservoir also filled and spilled a little this year, their users are also expecting a near average year for both their supplies and demands.

The runoff pattern for the North Fork was very similar to the rest of the Upper Colorado River Basin; characterized by a large sharp peak with a relatively rapid decline in river flows to near baseflow conditions (see attached hydrograph).

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The other significant concern for the North Fork of the Gunnison River Basin will be again related to the potential administration of the senior Redlands Water and Power Company call this winter. Just like for other water users in the Gunnison Basin, there is concern that if dry hydrological conditions persist and the USBR releases the minimum of 300 cfs from Aspinall Unit through the winter, there is the specter of a Redlands power call this winter. This could prevent junior reservoirs from storing throughout the basin and require replacement releases for M&I users.

2. Political Conditions Update

After an partially successful recall effort, two of three contested seats were overturned and two new board members have been appointed to the Grand Mesa Water Conservancy District. Ron Shaver and Ward Armstrong were appointed by the local judge and their president, George Fulton, was reappointed. The new board will be seated next week, and with the recent period of inactivity and uncertainty over, due to the recall process, it will soon be taking up the controversial issues of Cactus Park Reservoir and the Grand Mesa Project.

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3. Future Projects Study Update

The Enterprise is working cooperatively with the local water users to address long-term water supply issues (see related contract for Hydrological Investigations (CA03038)). There are three main areas of interest being investigated:

- A. Field work is scheduled to begin this month to further some of the findings from last year's reconnaissance level dam site investigation; specifically Western Engineers will be working with the state geology office to further investigate the identified geological issues of the Duke Stomp site on Cow Creek, a tributary of Leroux Creek. The steering committee for this study has recommended that the enterprise allocate one-third of the total \$30K budget line item for this study.
- B. The Enterprise is cooperating with the Overland Ditch and Reservoir Company in the next phase of an on-going study to more accurately quantify the Probable Maximum Precipitation event for the Overland Reservoir watershed. The intent of this study is to determine the if more water can be legally stored at this facility, pursuant to state regulations, using the existing spillway and without a great deal of costly infrastructure improvement. The steering committee for this study has also recommended that the enterprise allocate one-third of the \$30K budget line item for this study.
- C. Due to the recall effort, no decisions have been made yet with respect to the Grand Mesa WCD water supply investigations for this year.